

Hobo (ethical) code <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hobo>

An ethical code was created by Tourist Union #63 during its 1889 National Hobo Convention in St. Louis Missouri. This code was voted upon as a concrete set of laws to govern the Nation-wide Hobo Body; it reads this way:

1. Decide your own life, don't let another person run or rule you.
2. When in town, always respect the local law and officials, and try to be a gentleman at all times.
3. Don't take advantage of someone who is in a vulnerable situation, locals or other hobos.
4. Always try to find work, even if temporary, and always seek out jobs nobody wants. By doing so you not only help a business along, but ensure employment should you return to that town again.
5. When no employment is available, make your own work by using your added talents at crafts.
6. Do not allow yourself to become a stupid drunk and set a bad example for locals' treatment of other hobos.
7. When jungling in town, respect handouts, do not wear them out, another hobo will be coming along who will need them as bad, if not worse than you.
8. Always respect nature, do not leave garbage where you are jungling.
9. If in a community jungle, always pitch in and help.
10. Try to stay clean, and boil up wherever possible.
11. When traveling, ride your train respectfully, take no personal chances, cause no problems with the operating crew or host railroad, act like an extra crew member.
12. Do not cause problems in a train yard, another hobo will be coming along who will need passage through that yard.
13. Do not allow other hobos to molest children, expose all molesters to authorities, they are the worst garbage to infest any society.
14. Help all runaway children, and try to induce them to return home.
15. Help your fellow hobos whenever and wherever needed, you may need their help someday.
16. If present at a hobo court and you have testimony, give it. Whether for or against the accused, your voice counts!

## Hobo (sign) code



Hobo code at a [Canal Street Ferry](#) entrance in [New Orleans, Louisiana](#)

To cope with the difficulty of hobo life, hobos developed a system of symbols, or a code. Hobos would write this code with chalk or coal to provide directions, information, and warnings to other hobos. Some signs included "turn right here", "beware of hostile railroad police", "dangerous dog", "food available here", and so on. For instance:

- A cross signifies "angel food", that is, food served to the hobos after a sermon.
- A triangle with hands signifies that the homeowner has a gun.<sup>[11]</sup>
- A horizontal zigzag signifies a barking dog.<sup>[9]</sup>
- A square missing its top line signifies it is safe to camp in that location.
- A [top hat](#) and a triangle signify wealth.
- A spearhead signifies a warning to defend oneself.
- A circle with two parallel arrows means to get out fast, as hobos are not welcome in the area.<sup>[9]</sup>
- Two interlocked circles signify [handcuffs](#). (i.e. hobos are hauled off to jail).
- A [Caduceus symbol](#) signifies the house has a doctor living in it.
- A cross with a smiley face in one of the corners means the doctor at this office will treat hobos for free.
- A cat signifies that a kind lady lives here.<sup>[9]</sup>
- A wavy line (signifying water) above an X means fresh water and a campsite.
- Three [diagonal](#) lines mean it's not a safe place.
- A square with a slanted roof (signifying a house) with an X through it means that the house has already been "burned" or "tricked" by another hobo and is not a trusting house.
- Two shovels, signifying work was available (shovels, because most hobos performed manual labor).